
MONEY HEROES

Protecting consumers, preventing ID theft

Exposing fraudsters and helping you keep your personal data private are the consuming passions of these MONEY heroes.

Exposing billing fraud

David Lesser, 57
Consumer protection volunteer

A onetime bank general counsel who was winding down his own small manufacturing firm, Lesser answered a 2010 call for volunteers from the Office of Consumer Protection in Montgomery County, Md.

Drawing on his legal expertise, he spends 15 hours a week investigating and resolving complaints; he's recovered tens of thousands of dollars so far.

A big victory: Identifying hundreds of plumbers who charged customers an average of \$85 for sham permits when installing appliances -- then getting retailers that had hired the scammers to guard against future fraud.

"People often feel helpless when seeking redress. It takes a certain kind of perseverance and skill to succeed," says Lesser.



PHOTO: Eli Meir Kaplan

BY JOAN CAPLIN [@MONEY](#) - LAST UPDATED JULY 17 2013 08:58 AM ET